

“Wallflowers”

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Mrs. Gates

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When you think of a politician, an actor, or a public speaker, you see a friendly, outgoing and self confident person, you see an extrovert. This is not always the case. Today, many stereotypes exist about introverts and which jobs they can or cannot do, resulting in a believed inability to pursue and be successful in potential “extrovert” oriented careers. In America, about 50% of all working age Americans are considered introverted. Many stereotypes exist about introverts. The stereotypes are widely known and believed. The problem is that people make assumptions without real knowledge about the subject.

Other stereotypes, though less drastic, are more widespread and well known. For example, the idea that introverts are more creative or intelligent than extroverts. Or the misconception between shyness and introvertedness.

“All introverts are shy-- and all shy people are introverts. Shyness is so often confused with introversion that the two words are frequently used interchangeably -- but in fact, they're remarkably different traits. As Susan Cain pointed out in a Psychology Today blog, Bill Gates is introverted but not shy: He's quiet and bookish, but isn't bothered by what other people think of him” (Carolyn Gregoire n.p.).

There is a difference between being simply shy and being introverted. Introverts can do well as public speakers or leaders, while shy people often cannot. Another often false belief is that introverts don't like being around other people. This is untrue as well, the type of interaction affects the introverts reaction to it. While they do prefer smaller more personal relations, they do not necessarily dislike to go to places with large amounts of people.

Jobs such as actors, musicians, or politicians are considered to be jobs for extroverts.

Introverts should consider jobs such as animal care, archivist, or court reporter, even though the pay is low. (Susan Adams 1,2). Many people believe that introverts don't make good leaders or public speakers, this is not necessarily true (Carolyn Gregoire n.p.). There are many people in the world that are introverted yet very successful. People like J.K. Rowling, Emma Watson, Rosa Parks, Audrey Hepburn, Warren Buffett, Einstein, and even Gandhi to name a few. In the music career as well, widely believed to be a mainly extrovert line of work, introverts are beginning to excel. The style of music they do is often different, granted, but is also becoming quite popular itself. Did you know Christina Aguilera is an introvert? These people have become successful artists and speakers. They have changed history, without being extroverts.

Introversion is believed to be a negative trait. Opposite of the happy, free, and optimistic extroverts. People are told that they shouldn't want to sit at home with a good book, or go on a small outing with friends. You are expected as a teen to want to go to a loud, raging party. You must have fun there as well. If you are sitting off to the side, people watching, you are not good at having fun. You are a stick in the mud. "Introverts, like only children, are stereotyped and often viewed as lacking or suffering" (Susan Newman, Ph. D. n.p.) Introverts like to be alone sometimes, so introverts are sad and lonely of course. An introvert is more focused inward, more reflective.

People want introverts to become more confident, because a misconception about introversion is that they are most definitely not self-confident now. But they turn into an extrovert by doing so. "The truth is, the more self-assured and confident we become with our true introverted selves, the more people will crinkle their brows at us and refuse to believe we are

introverted”(Michaela n.p.). Apparently no self-confident introverts allowed. What is this introvert to do? They are expected to be quiet and shy, and if they are not, they are not introverted. “In an extroverted society, the difference between an introvert and an extrovert is that an introvert is often unconsciously deemed guilty until proven innocent.” (Criss Jami n.a.) Introverts don’t need to be changed. Many introverts are happy the way they are, which is not necessarily sad or quiet. Introverts have friends, they just prefer to interact in a smaller, close-knit group of people, unlike many extroverts.

While there are also many stereotypes about extroverts, they are more along the lines of being loud, talkative, and party-goers. These may not always be true, but they are not as negative as people thinking that you don’t like people, when the truth is you like a more personal conversation. An estimated fifty-percent of the American population is believed to be introverts. If the “extrovert” jobs are only allowed to be filled by extroverts, what are the introverts to do? The jobs that pay well are taken so they have to take low paying jobs instead, because people don’t believe they can do the other jobs. The fifty-percent is just as able-bodied at almost, if not every, job that an extrovert can do.

Introverts will just have to fight through the stereotypes. They have existed for a long time, and the only way to change people’s points of view is to prove that they are wrong. Correct the mistakes, and don’t be ashamed to be different.

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